

Abstract

The topic of this thesis is virtual death in video games. In theoretical part, the concept of avatar (player's agent in the game world) is defined, concerning the relationship between player and avatar as well as the main characteristics of the avatar. The aim of the theoretical core of this thesis is to introduce virtual death; because of various expressions of death in many games, it is difficult to describe virtual death generally. Virtual death, which is compared also to the real death, is revealed as a communication of player's failure. What can not be separated from virtual death is the instant resurrection of the avatar, and also the means how to avoid virtual death. The practical part of the thesis offers a close reading of the computer role-playing game *Planescape: Torment*, focusing on the theme of death. Unlike most mainstream games, *Torment* presents the player with sophisticated perspectives on the matters of life, death, immortality and responsibility. Even the high-order goal of the main character (which becomes the goal of the player as well) is to gain knowledge about himself and then willingly die. This stands in a sharp contrast to usual narratives, forcing the player to suppress the life-saving reflex and let his avatar die in the end. The comparative method is used to identify death-related motives (regarding locations and characters presented in *Torment*), many of which are similar to ones used in real-world teachings, and interpret them in the context of the game. As the game belongs to the fantasy genre, this close reading uses also the discourse of philosophy, hermetism or religion.